United Nations A/AC.172/2003/L.1

General Assembly

Distr.: Limited
8 April 2003

Original: English

Committee on Conferences
Organizational session for 2003

Annotated provisional agenda for the organizational session for 2003

1. Adoption of the agenda for the organizational session for 2003.
2. Election of officers.
3. Organization of work for 2003.
4. Programme of work for 2003.
5. Adoption of the agenda for the substantive session of 2003.
6. Other business.

Annotations

1. Adoption of the agenda for the organizational session for 2003

2. Election of officers

Rule 103 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly provides that committees other than Main Committees shall elect a Chairman, one or more Vice-Chairmen and a Rapporteur. These officers shall be elected on the basis of equitable geographical distribution, experience and personal competence.

In past years, the Committee on Conferences has elected, in addition to the Chairman, three Vice-Chairmen and a Rapporteur.

At its organizational session for 1989, on 1 March 1989, the Committee agreed in principle that thenceforth the chairmanship would rotate annually among the regional groups.

3. Organization of work for 2003

At its 341st meeting, on 27 August 1992, the Committee decided to maintain its biennial programme of work, dealing with items relating to documentation in even-numbered years and those relating to meetings in odd-numbered years. The Committee also decided that some items would be considered on an annual basis.

03-31389 (E) 150403

At its organizational session for 2002, on 22 March 2002, the Committee adopted its agenda for 2002 and requested the Secretariat to submit a draft agenda for 2003 to the Committee at its organizational session for 2003.

In paragraph 4 of its resolution 46/190 A of 20 December 1991, the General Assembly took note of the guidelines adopted by the Committee with regard to intersessional departures from the approved calendar of conferences and meetings.[1] At its substantive session of 1994, the Committee decided that requests for intersessional departures submitted to the Committee should, in future, be reviewed by the Bureau, in consultation with the Secretariat, for subsequent action. At its substantive session of 1995, the Committee decided that requests for intersessional departures submitted to the Committee that involved a change of venue should be referred to the members for approval. Departures that involved other types of changes should, as the Committee had decided at its substantive session of 1994, be reviewed by the Bureau, in consultation with the Secretariat, for subsequent action.

As stated in the report on improving the performance of the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services (A/57/289), paragraph 15, in order to administer the programme of meetings to comply strictly with the calendar of conferences and meetings as approved by the General Assembly, with the exception of plenary meetings of the General Assembly, the Security Council, and the high-level segment of the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council, ad hoc meeting extensions beyond normal working hours are not accommodated by conference services. Requests for sessions beyond authorized duration, or intersessional "informal consultations" which take the form of additional, unapproved sessions under another name, will be channelled for consideration through the Committee on Conferences in accordance with mandated arrangements. Statements of programme budget implications will be issued in such instances where required.

Moreover, meetings of the Committee may be required in compliance with paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 35/10 A of 3 November 1980, by which all proposals affecting the schedule of conferences and meetings made at sessions of the Assembly are to be reviewed by the Committee when administrative implications are being considered under the requirements of rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the Assembly.

4. Programme of work for 2003

The terms of reference of the Committee are set forth in paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 43/222 B of 21 December 1988.

Annexed to the present document is a draft agenda for the substantive session of 2003, followed by annotations, which takes into account the earlier decisions of the Committee and subsequent decisions and resolutions of the General Assembly.

The Secretariat managed to reduce significantly the number of reports for the substantive session of the Committee in 2002. The provision of information in such a concise manner was welcomed by the Committee. Accordingly, for the 2003 session, the reporting on different subjects concerning conference services will again be consolidated in two main reports: one on issues related mainly to the report

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 32* (A/46/32 and Corr.1 and Add.1), para. 77.

of the Secretary-General (A/57/289), as requested in resolution 57/283 B of 15 April 2003; and the other on the utilization of conference services and other matters regularly reported on under the pattern of conferences agenda item.

Although the agenda for the substantive session follows the resolutions under the pattern of conferences agenda item, the Committee may wish to organize its work along the lines of the topics listed above.

5. **Adoption of the agenda for the substantive session of 2003**

6. **Other business**

Annex

Draft agenda for the substantive session of 2003

1. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
2. Calendar of conferences and meetings:
   (a) Intersessional departures for 2003 and related matters;
   (b) Adoption of the draft biennial calendar of conferences and meetings for 2004-2005;
   (c) Improved utilization of conference-servicing resources and facilities:
      (i) Meeting statistics of United Nations organs, and consultations with/letters to bodies concerning utilization of the conference services available to them;
      (ii) Provision of interpretation services to meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States;
      (iii) Improved utilization of conference facilities at the United Nations Office at Nairobi;
      (iv) Improved utilization of the conference centre at the Economic Commission for Africa;
      (v) Improving the performance of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management;
   (d) Requests for exceptions to section I, paragraph 7, of General Assembly resolution 40/243;
   (e) Consideration of the draft biennial calendar of conferences and meetings of subsidiary organs of the Economic and Social Council for 2004-2005.
3. Documentation and publication-related matters: submission, availability and distribution of documentation.
4. Translation- and interpretation-related matters.
5. Review of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005: Department for General Assembly and Conference Management.
6. Information technology.
7. Organization of work.
8. Adoption of the report.

Annotations

1. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

2. Calendar of conferences and meetings

(a) Intersessional departures for 2003 and related matters

A compilation of such matters will be provided for inclusion in the report of the Committee.

(b) Adoption of the draft biennial calendar of conferences and meetings for 2004-2005

A draft calendar for 2004-2005 will be submitted by the Secretariat to the Committee on Conferences at its substantive session of 2003.

The Committee will submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session the draft biennial calendar of conferences and meetings for 2004-2005.

(c) Improved utilization of conference-servicing resources and facilities

(i) Meeting statistics of United Nations organs, and consultations with/letters to bodies concerning utilization of the conference services available to them

The Committee has studied annually a series of reports showing the meeting statistics of a number of United Nations organs in New York, Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi. In accordance with paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 48/222 A of 23 December 1993, the information includes analyses of trends and figures on the utilization of conference-servicing resources by United Nations organs in New York, Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi. At its substantive session of 1999, the Committee requested that the organs be listed in the order of their utilization factors and that the utilization factors for a three-year period be provided in the report so that trends in the utilization factors of various bodies could be easily identified.

The Secretariat will report on the above request.

At its substantive session of 2002, the Committee requested its Chairperson to continue to consult on its behalf with the chairpersons of bodies that had consistently utilized less than the applicable benchmark figure (80 per cent) of their allocated resources for the past three sessions, with a view to making appropriate recommendations in order to achieve the optimum utilization of conference-servicing resources. The Committee concluded that, should there be no improvement in the utilization statistics of the organs most consistently underutilizing those resources, it would consider further steps to remedy the situation and make recommendations thereon to the General Assembly.

An oral report will be presented on the matter.

In section II A, paragraph 18, of resolution 57/283 B, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to report in writing on the utilization rates of interpretation services and conference facilities at all duty stations.

The Secretariat will report on the above request.

(ii) Provision of interpretation services to meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States

In section II A, paragraph 13, of resolution 57/283 B, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session, through the Committee on Conferences, on the methodology that accurately reflects the situation of the provision of conference services to regional and other major groupings of Member States, taking into account the concerns raised in its resolutions 56/254 D of 27 March 2002 and 56/287 of 27 June 2002.

In section II A, paragraph 14, of resolution 57/283 B, the General Assembly reaffirmed its decision to include all necessary resources in the budget for the biennium 2004-2005 to provide interpretation services for meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States upon request by those groups, on an ad hoc basis, in accordance with established practice, and requested the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session, through the Committee on Conferences, a report on the implementation of this decision.

In section II A, paragraph 16, of resolution 57/283 B, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its second resumed fifty-seventh session on the cost implications of providing more predictable and adequate conference services to the meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States, for its consideration in the context of the proposed programme budget for 2004-2005.

The Secretariat will report on the above requests.

(iii) Improved utilization of conference facilities at the United Nations Office at Nairobi

In section II A, paragraph 5, of its resolution 57/283 B, the General Assembly reiterated its request to the Secretary-General to consider improving and modernizing the conference facilities at the United Nations Office at Nairobi in order to accommodate adequately major meetings and conferences, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session through the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Committee on Conferences.

In section II A, paragraph 8, of its resolution 57/283 B, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report on the utilization of conference facilities and services at the United Nations Office at Nairobi for consideration to the General Assembly during its second resumed fifty-seventh session, through the Committee on Conferences.

A report will be submitted.

(iv) Improved utilization of the conference centre at the Economic Commission in Africa

In section II A, paragraph 21, of its resolution 57/283 B, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to explore all possible options to increase further the utilization of the conference centre at the Economic Commission for Africa and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session through the Committee on Conferences.

The Secretariat will report on this matter.

(v) Improving the performance of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management

In section II A, paragraph 19, of its resolution 57/283 B, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General, inter alia, to develop methods and indicators for assessing the performance of conference services from a full system standpoint and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session through the Committee on Conferences.

In section II B, paragraph 11, of its resolution 57/283 B, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General, as a follow-up to his report (A/57/289), to report on how the reform initiative will involve the other major duty stations, taking into account their specificities and operational responsibilities, in the context of the present resolution.

In section II B, paragraph 12, of its resolution 57/283 B, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to ensure that the structural and name changes of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management will be consistent with the existing mandates, inter alia, the medium-term plan, as well as ensuring the implementation of these mandates, and not lead to any involuntary personnel departures, and that they should improve and not negatively affect the quality and timeliness of technical support services being provided to intergovernmental bodies and not negatively affect the quantity of production and distribution of documents in hard copies, as requested by Member States, simultaneously in the six official languages, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session.

The Secretariat will report on these matters.

In section II, paragraph 2, of its resolution 56/242 of 24 December 2001, the General Assembly requests the Secretary-General to enhance further the established practice of workload sharing among duty stations in documentation services as a means to improve the utilization of conference-servicing resources, and to include information on these efforts in the context of a single, comprehensive report to be submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session.

The Secretariat will report on the above request.

(d) Requests for exceptions to section I, paragraph 7, of General Assembly resolution 40/243

In paragraph 15 of its resolution 47/202 A of 22 December 1992, the General Assembly demanded that all subsidiary organs of the Assembly comply with the provisions of section I, paragraph 7, of its resolution 40/243, in which it had decided that no subsidiary organ of the Assembly would meet at United Nations Headquarters during a regular session of the Assembly unless explicitly authorized by the Assembly.

In accordance with the procedure established by the Committee at its 1986 session and reaffirmed at its 1992 session, chairpersons of subsidiary organs of the General Assembly that wish to meet at Headquarters during the main part of the Assembly submit their requests to the Chairperson of the Committee.

(e) Consideration of the draft biennial calendar of conferences and meetings of subsidiary organs of the Economic and Social Council for 2004-2005

The Economic and Social Council, in its decision 1998/103 of 5 February 1988, decided to invite the Committee to review the Council's draft biennial calendar of conferences and meetings and to submit, as appropriate, its recommendations thereon to the Council. The draft calendar for the biennium 2004-2005, which is to be presented to the Council at its substantive session of 2003 in July, is expected to be available for consideration by the Committee before the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council. The Committee may wish to consider meeting at that time in order to discuss the draft and to convey its observations to the Council.

3. Documentation and publication-related matters: submission, availability and distribution of documentation

In section III, paragraph 12 of its resolution 57/283 B, the General Assembly noted that the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management would assign timing of submission of manuscripts that takes into account the programme of work of the session at which the report is to be considered and the time needed to produce the document simultaneously in the six official languages at a high level of quality.

In section III, paragraph 13, of its resolution 57/283 B, the General Assembly also noted the intention of the Secretary-General to improve the current situation of late submission and issuance of documents with this approach in order to comply more effectively with the existing rules on the issuance of documentation, and stressed in this regard that such an approach should be aimed at improving the functioning of the Secretariat and, at the same time, facilitating the work of Member States, and requested the Secretary-General to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session.

In section III, paragraph 14, of its resolution 57/283 B, the General Assembly reiterated the need to develop a responsibility and accountability system within the Secretariat in order to ensure timely submission of documents for processing; and in section III, paragraph 15, requested the Secretary-General to submit a comprehensive report to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session on the implementation of paragraph 14 of the present section, taking into consideration section III, paragraph 10, of its resolution 56/242.

In section III, paragraph 17, of its resolution 57/283 B, the General Assembly noted with concern the delay in the issuance of verbatim and summary records, and in this regard requested the Secretary-General to take appropriate measures to ameliorate the situation.

In section III, paragraph 18, of its resolution 57/283 B, the General Assembly reiterated its request to the Secretary-General to study the possibility of further measures in this regard, including enhanced cooperation between the production of press releases by the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat and the preparation of summary records by the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, bearing in mind the different nature of press releases and summary records.

In section III, paragraph 21, of its resolution 57/283 B, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to ensure the full implementation of section III,

paragraph 20, whereby the availability in Arabic of all documents and publications of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia would increase to 100 per cent, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session.

In section III, paragraph 27, of its resolution 57/283 B, the General Assembly noted the intention of the Secretary-General to engage in consultations with universities, depository libraries and other institutions regarding the continued provision of United Nations documentation to them; and in section III, paragraph 28 requested the Secretary-General to provide a report on the outcome of the aforementioned consultations to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session.

The Secretariat will report on these requests.

4. Translation- and interpretation-related matters

In section IV, paragraph 1, of its resolution 57/283 B, the General Assembly noted with concern that the Arabic and English units in the Interpretation Service at the United Nations Office at Nairobi are not yet fully staffed, and in this regard reiterated its request to the Secretary-General contained in section IV, paragraph 9, of its resolution 56/242 to fill expeditiously the remaining vacancies and requested the Secretary-General to report thereon to the General Assembly at its second resumed fifty-seventh session.

In section IV, paragraph 5, of its resolution 57/283 B, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to take all necessary measures to fill expeditiously the vacant posts in all six official language services of the United Nations and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session; and in section IV, paragraph 6, also requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session on the implementation of section IV, paragraph 6, of its resolution 56/242 on reducing the high rate of self-revision and according high priority to revisers in recruitment.

The Secretariat will report on these matters.

5. Review of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005: Department for General Assembly and Conference Management

At its 327th meeting, on 12 June 1991, the Committee decided to review the relevant programme narrative of the proposed programme budget for conference services, and to provide its views thereon to the General Assembly.

In light of that decision, the Secretariat will submit to the Committee, for consideration at its substantive session of 2003, the relevant programme narrative of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005, Department for General Assembly and Conference Management.

In particular, in section II A, paragraph 15, of its resolution 57/283 B, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to provide information on meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States not serviced by conference services in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005.

Furthermore, in section II B, paragraph 3, of its resolution 57/283 B, the General Assembly noted the proposal to integrate the functions of the technical servicing secretariats of the Fifth and Sixth Committees of the General Assembly into the

Department, and requested the Secretary-General to submit this proposal in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005 for further consideration.

In section IV, paragraph 3, of its resolution 57/283 B, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General, in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005, to make proposals so as to fill the de facto gap between the Spanish Translation Service and the other official language services with similar workloads, without any adverse effect on the other official language services.

The Secretariat will report on the above request.

6. Information technology

At its substantive session of 2002, the Committee stressed that information technology was essential in achieving integrated global management of conference services and requested the Secretary-General to report in 2003 on the implementation of the information technology projects of the Department.

The Secretariat will report on the above request.

7. Organization of work

In section II A, paragraph 20, of its resolution 57/283 B, the General Assembly encouraged the Committee on Conferences to keep under continued review the procedures for the participation of observers in the work of the Committee.

8. Adoption of the report